



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **WSDA begins gypsy moth spraying**

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) began this year's treatments against the European gypsy moth early Tuesday morning in Bellevue. An 11-acre site in downtown Bellevue was treated with the biological insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (*Btk*).

Sites in Bellevue, Port Ludlow, and Mayfield in Lewis County are all scheduled to receive three ground treatments of the biological insecticide between now and mid-May. The treatments will occur three to 14 days apart.

The timing of first treatments in Port Ludlow and Mayfield will depend on the weather according to Chad Phillips, WSDA eradication coordinator. "We won't treat in rain or excessive wind," Phillips said. State officials said they won't know until the day before whether conditions are right for a treatment.

All residents and businesses in the three proposed treatment zones have given WSDA permission to treat their properties.

The biological insecticide *Btk* has been used on many previous eradication projects and has a proven safety record with people, pets, livestock, birds, fish, and other insects such as bees. *Btk* is registered for use in the U.S. by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is commonly used by organic farmers. The active ingredient in *Btk* is found naturally in the soil. The insecticide is toxic only to moths and butterflies in the caterpillar stage when the insecticide is applied.

Before the decision was made to proceed with treatments in Bellevue, Port Ludlow, and Mayfield, WSDA consulted with other state and federal agencies and prepared two environmental documents that were made available on the Internet and other locations for 30 days of public review and comment.

The Bellevue site is being treated at night to avoid traffic congestion. The Port Ludlow and Mayfield sites will be treated during the day.

Gypsy moth introductions have been detected in Washington every year since 1977, but permanent populations have not been established because of consistent trapping and eradication programs.

For more information, citizens may call the department's toll-free hotline at 1-800-443-6684, or visit the department's Web site at [www.agr.wa.gov](http://www.agr.wa.gov), and click on "gypsy moth."

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